

Commonweal

ROBERT COLES

THE OLD CHURCH, THE SPANISH CHURCH, THE AMERICAN CHURCH



THE UNDESIRABLE VETERAN
RAYMOND P. BOULANGER

NIXON'S GIFT TO THE NATION
MICHAEL NOVAK

THE FETUS: WHOSE PROPERTY?
AMITAI ETZIONI

THE SPIDER'S STRATAGEM
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

FIZZLING SEXUAL TIME BOMBS
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NEWS & VIEWS

Hypocrisy in Action

Ron Ziegler's White House days may be numbered, if the Presidential shoving incident at New Orleans is public indication of his private standing with Richard Nixon. But, as Presidential adviser Melvin Laird, has reportedly suggested, he should go anyway, because of his misleading statements on Watergate. On that score, the record speaks for itself.

Regarding White House involvement:

ZIEGLER: "Colson made it quite clear to me that he was in no way involved" in the attempt to bug Democratic National Committee headquarters. (June 20, 1972, *Washington Star*)

ZIEGLER: No link between the White House and the Watergate has been found "because no link exists." (Oct. 17, 1972, *New York Post*)

ZIEGLER: "... Mr. Dean had absolutely no prior knowledge or any awareness whatsoever of the Watergate incident..." (March 26, 1973, *Washington Post*)

ZIEGLER: "I again specifically deny as absolutely false the fact that Dean had prior knowledge." (*Ibid.*)

ZIEGLER: "No one in the White House had any involvement or prior knowledge of the event." (March 30, 1973, *Washington Post*)

ZIEGLER: "All previous White House statements about the Watergate case are inoperative." (April 17, 1973, *Congressional Quarterly*)

ZIEGLER: "I'm sure there are certain elements who will try to stretch this matter into something it is not." (June 20, 1972, *Atlanta Constitution*)

Regarding White House cooperation and investigations:

ZIEGLER: The FBI and "appropriate investigative authorities are looking into the matter and doing so in a

very competent way, and will pursue this investigation very completely and adequately." (July 4, 1972, *New York News*)

ZIEGLER: "The President wants it made clear it has not been and is not and will not be the objective of the White House to cover up or withhold any information on the Watergate matter. . . ." (*Ibid.*)

ZIEGLER: "We have no perimeters in our desire to cooperate with the [Ervin] committee. . . . There are no barriers in our desire or willingness to cooperate." (April 3, 1973, *Baltimore Sun*)

ZIEGLER: "... Mr. Richardson has been given total authority and total flexibility." . . . When Nixon delegates authority to someone, "he [Nixon] also retains that authority. . . ." (May 3, 1973, *New York Times*)

The only public official with a record of misleading statements to match Ziegler's is, of course, Richard Nixon. Measure this sampling in light of developments:

NIXON: "The White House has had no involvement whatever in this particular [Watergate] incident." (June 23, 1972, *Washington Star*)

NIXON: "I can say categorically . . . that no one in the White House staff, no one in this Administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident." (August 29, 1972, news conference)

NIXON: The "plumbers' operation had no connection with the break-in of the Democratic Headquarters, or the aftermath." (May 27, 1973, *New York Times*)

NIXON: "Executive privilege will not be used by this Administration as a shield to prevent embarrassing information being available . . ." (March 17, 1973, *Congressional Quarterly*)

NIXON: "I condemn any attempts to cover up in this case, no matter who is involved." (April 18, 1973, *New York Times*)

The last two are the most hypocritical of all.

A Catonsville-9 Stamp?

Jim Forest, who describes himself as a "fallen-away draft-records burner," debuted in August as editor of *Fellowship*, monthly publication of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, peace organization based in Nyack, N.Y.

A highlight of the issue: reproduction of the recent Postal Service block of commemorative stamps recalling the Boston Tea Party. *Fellowship* hailed the stamps as "celebrating nonviolent resistance." It continued:

"While we received no press releases from the Postmaster General, we wonder if this doesn't mark the beginning of a whole series of civil-disobedience commemoratives: a scene of families fleeing slavery along the routes of the 'underground railroad'; Quaker Mary Dyer's execution on the Boston Common for refusing to be banished; Rosa Parks' refusing to leave her bus seat in Montgomery; auto workers occupying their Detroit factory; suffragettes in prison for picketing Wilson's White House; Thoreau under lock and key for tax refusal. . . ."

The possibilities are numerous and startling, *Fellowship* added. "The series might conclude with an event that comes nearly full-circle to the Boston Tea Party—the Catonsville Nine's draft-records party. The Postmaster General might announce that the Nine had, in American fashion, improved on the earlier model. After all, what they destroyed was less nourishing than tea. Progress, most certainly."

Managing the News

The Nixon Administration, which constantly complains about being used by the media, is far from being above using the media itself. Latest examples:

—The heralded return of Susan Agnew, the VP's daughter, from Brazil following an alleged threat against

her life. . . . When the facts caught up with the manufactured news, it turned out there was no threat to Susan's life. "I think that her return can be attributed to the problems her family is having, and perhaps she was homesick for her parents," said Nobel Cuiabano of the Brazilian federal police.

—The celebrated hunt for Edwin Gaudet, the ex-policeman reportedly out to kill President Nixon on his visit to New Orleans. The FBI turned up Gaudet in New Mexico (a long way from New Orleans for the sharpest of sharpshooters), where he was alleged to have engaged in a gun fight with Secret Servicemen. When the facts caught up with the case, the charge of threatening to kill the President was dropped when the "witness" to the threat was unable to identify Gaudet; and the three-count charge of shooting at officers was reduced to one, when officers could not positively testify that Gaudet was shooting at them. It developed that the one shot Gaudet did shoot was into the ground . . . to stop a non-uniformed man who was aiming a pistol at him.

Odds and Ends

—Another not-to-be-lamented victim of Watergate: *Monday*, the Republican party weekly, remembered, among other things, for its anti-welfare cartoon showing a black person in a diaper and for its comment on Picasso's death ("Now Picasso is a good Communist!"). GOP National Chairman George Bush announced the demise of *Monday*, saying that "during the past several weeks the Republican National Committee has suffered a severe decline in contributions."

—The anonymous word in the Senate cloakroom: "Nixon has done for politicians what the Boston Strangler has done for door-to-door salesmen."

JOHN DEEDY

CORRESPONDENCE



Right Notes, Wrong Key

Annandale, Virginia
To the Editors: In Gary MacEoin's "Varieties of Catholicism" on the church in Latin America [June 15], all the notes are correct but it's set in the wrong key. Of course most of the people of Latin America live their lives outside the direct influence of the church, whether reformed or unreconstructed; so in the United States, so in Italy, France, Germany and among the 5/6ths of mankind who are not even baptized. It's been over two decades now since the Chilean Jesuit Pedro Hurtado declared Catholicism to be a minority religion ("declaring" what had long been the fact) since it was alienated from the masses.

But it's precisely because so much has happened in the Latin American church since the pioneering days of Hurtado, Larrain, Velazquez and the hundreds who have followed them that sympathetic observers were often led to the new formula: *Extra Americam Latinam, nulla salus est*. What harsher realities finally obtrude on that vision, disenchantment is total.

My own observation is that there is more health, vitality, commitment and excitement—more vibrant Christianity—within the Latin American church than anywhere else; but to say "within" is not to say "throughout."

MacEoin's own catalog of some of these signs of hope—from Berryman and Barreiro to the Brazilian bishops—recorded both in this article and in the scores of other writings which have made him the dean of foreign journalists in this field, support that observation, and tend to belie a pessimism born in the first place of too uncritical an optimism. If 15 percent of the bishops of Latin America, as Comblin asserts and MacEoin confirms in the Brazilian case, are committed to radical social change, that has to be some kind of record and worth a Te Deum at least.

(Continued on page 510)

NEWS & VIEWS: 490

EDITORIALS: 491

CORRESPONDENCE: 491

THE FETUS: WHOSE PROPERTY?: Amitai Etzioni 493
NIXON'S GIFT TO THE NATION: Michael Novak 494
THE OLD CHURCH, THE SPANISH CHURCH, THE AMERICAN CHURCH: Robert Coles 495
THE UNDESIRABLE VETERAN: Raymond P. Boulanger 500
THE SCREEN: Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr. 501
MAILER'S MARILYN: Saul Maloff 503
VERSE: Jack Lindeman 502; Edward Proffitt 505
FIZZLING SEXUAL TIME BOMBS: Jeffrey Meyers 506
BOOKS: Joseph A. Page, Ronald de Feo 508

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THE REAL FOOD CRISIS

In recent days, newspapers carried reports of relief planes loaded with food and medicine for drought and famine victims in Africa sitting idle on runways because of a lack of fuel to enable the planes to fly. The stories were bona fide. But if the needy on the one hand, and humanitarians on the other, reacted cynically, it would be understandable. For by indirection the accounts of the stranded planes shifted the priorities of two urgencies confronting the world, and tended to make suffering humanity pawns of a sort in the big-power jockeying for oil.

There is, of course, a fuel crisis for highly developed countries like the United States, and its resolution does indeed depend upon accessibility to oil controlled by nations newly reluctant about parting with their prized natural resource. But more especially there is a crisis of food and water, and this crisis should command the concern of the world fully as much as that of oil. A 2600-mile stretch of Africa bordering the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, for example, has moved from crisis to catastrophe for want of the barest food necessities; and figures of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization indicate that some 40 developing nations are near the brink of starvation because of just a one-percent drop last year in farm production. Millions of lives are involved. But one hears more about oil to power the surfeit of automobiles than one does about the plight of these millions so badly in need of food.

There is a quickening concern over food in the United States, to be sure. But it is a concern pegged not to meeting humanitarian obligations so much as it is to selling to the newly opened markets of China and Russia, while at the same time building up food reserves domestically in order to help curb the inflation brought on by the Nixon Administration's inept food policies. There is nothing contemptible in themselves about these latter objectives, but only if they are not met at the expense of people infinitely worse off than the Chinese and the Russians, and affluent Americans fretting over having to pay more for their loaf of bread and their cuts of red meat. In point of fact, food prices have long been unrealistically low in the United States, and American consumers must reconcile themselves to paying more—in fairness to the American farmer, as well as because of any help extended the desperately needy of the world.

Commonweal: 491

In this context, Americans must face up to the likelihood that the problems of food supply and demand are going to be with the country for some time—perhaps indefinitely, given world conditions. These problems will necessitate not only a constantly imaginative policy, but also some keen humanitarian instincts, since the choices of the future may increasingly be between profit and moral responsibility.

On the matter of policy, the Nixon Administration has shown some resourcefulness. It has altered old price-support programs for the better, and has returned to production some 40-million acres of farmland previously held fallow. But its humanitarian instincts are as impossible as ever, as recent dealings with relief organizations demonstrate. Agencies like CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee feed between 80 and 100 million of the world's hungry. This summer the U.S. Department of Agriculture put all on notice that there would be no food surpluses available in August and possibly none also in September. The decision in effect suspends the U.S. Food for Peace program under which humanitarian agencies for years have provided for the needy.

The situation has evoked an angry letter to the *New York Times* from Pastor Richard J. Neuhaus of St. John the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, pointing up the phenomenon of food supplies which once went to the poor and the needy now going to the highest bidder. "That splendid humanitarian organizations may be destroyed [as a consequence of this] is bad enough," Pastor Neuhaus argued; "that millions of the poor may be deprived of the bare necessities of life is an unconscionable result of the cruel doctrine that food should be distributed not according to need but according to ability to pay."

As Neuhaus conceded, the policy may be wonderful for the U.S. balance of payments, but it is poison to a national sense of honor and decency. His point calls for reflection at the highest levels of government.

THE GOOD MAN

Senator Harold Hughes—Democrat of Iowa, Army veteran, reformed alcoholic, truck driver, three-term governor—is a good man. He is physically imposing and a mighty-voiced—if long-winded—orator. He is a friend of labor and eventually became a critic of the Vietnam war. But his principal concern, appropriately, has been the social problem which was once a personal problem to himself—addiction. Two years ago there were those who thought he should be President of the United States; and history has not proven them wrong.

Meanwhile, Harold Hughes has also been profoundly and—both to those who think all religion is superstition and to those religious people who could not share his interest in spiritism—embarrassingly religious. It is no surprise that he plans to give up his political career for a religious one, working with two foundations: the Fellowship Foundation of Washington, D.C. and the International Christian Leadership. They sponsor prayer breakfasts.

For his personal decision, which the Senator has come to "after a long period of inner struggle," we respect him. Happily, he has not offered his own move as an example for other good men. Nor can we rest easily with all the implications of the thinking that went into his decision, particularly if his line of thought were widely adopted by religious men: "I have long believed that government will change for the better only when people change for the better in their hearts."

If government has not done well enough in making men better it sometimes does better than religion in making them behave. Justice—particularly racial and economic justice—is often more quickly achieved by passing laws than by waiting until we can change men's hearts. In Washington too many of the more successful political hearts are as hard as Pharaoh's and the Pharisees'. They know how to be faithful to the prayer breakfasts and White House worship services and still keep their immunity from the demands of the Gospel intact. It may or not be possible to stop a President and his advisers from bombing Hanoi and Cambodia or from systematically undermining the whole electoral system by trying to transform their hearts. Usually it is not. But it is possible to stop them by political action, through reformed institutions, as well as by fighting them with leaders who do have some moral sense.

COMING

THOMAS F. O'MEARA discusses the question of feminine ministry and clerical culture:

"More and more women either are in the ministry (but unrecognized by the church), or want to enter ministry (with public recognition). If they are Christians professionally trained and involved in a full-time effort to serve the presence of the Spirit in the world, are they not ministers? Their apostolates are concrete, professionalized expressions of the ministry of evangelization (education) or of service (health and welfare). Recently they have begun to participate in the ministry of leadership in parishes. Why is ordination as public commission withheld?"

THE FETUS: WHOSE PROPERTY?

It might be argued that the whole legal point behind the abortion ruling is that the fetus is not yet a person, is not a child, but it's part of the woman's body. Hence she ought to be entitled to deal with it as she sees fit. But the law ought to recognize that the fetus has a different status than, say, toenails. It was brought into

Or, it might suffice to require that the husband be *informed and consulted*, but not to give him a right to co-decide, which in effect, amounts to a veto power. But such steps should be reserved as measures of last resort; basically, the arrangement should help uphold, not undermine, the family.

AMITAI ETZIONI

(Amitai Etzioni, sociology professor at Columbia and director of the Center for Policy Research, is author of *Genetic Fix*, to be published in November by Macmillan.)

NIXON'S GIFT TO THE NATION

MICHAEL NOVAK

A nation "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" is based on a creed, not a realized fact. A nation committed to a dream is more theological than some suppose.

The people of the United States are not a merely expedient, merely profit-seeking people. Every day our watchful guardians unearth new scandals, probe areas of neglect, and launch new causes.

We are a people consumed with the desire to be good. We have ideals. We have a dream. We judge ourselves harshly for each of our abundant faults.

We do not regard America as a piece of geography, a nation corrupt like any other, a state in which self-interest-as-usual is good enough. When America disappoints us, we are outraged. We regard her, among all the nations, as "the city on the hill"—the last best hope, the nation with solemn obligations accepted on behalf of all. America is not a merely secular city. It is a sacred city.

Atheists, agnostics, practical men who hold no God in awe, journalists whose profession teaches cynicism, hold in respect to America passions not at all flat, neutral, or lacking in moral power. They hold certain values sacred and regard their betrayal with contempt.

You cannot understand America in merely one-dimensioned terms. You will not grasp her political energy, nor penetrate the passions of her political campaigns, nor comprehend her orgies of self-criticism and perennial discontent, unless you recognize that Americans hold holy what they are attempting.

This is why Richard Nixon has so injured the national imagination. In response to months of accusations, he behaves like a man who knows he is guilty and struggles, now, solely to

survive. We watch with morbid curiosity a man caught in a whirlpool, on the edge of jagged rocks, and marvel at his dexterous escapes from doom. He may come out alive. But why did he steer the ship of state toward Scylla and Charybdis?

Yet Richard Nixon offers a sorely needed gift to the national imagination. American civilization has always evaded the experiences of guilt, evil and defeat that lie at the heart of Judaism and Christianity. Pietistic and Bible-quoting as the American religion has been, it has always fallen short of Christian and Jewish wisdom.

Some thought that defeat in Southeast Asia, complicity in horrors like My Lai, and the "realism" of the bombing of Hanoi during Christmas 1972 would at last instruct the American conscience in its capacity for evil. The nation, they hoped, might at last learn that we do not represent a "new world," morally superior to some "old world." The American heart is not "good" (as President Nixon has several times proclaimed). We are a people like all other peoples, neither better nor worse, only different, and richer, and morally rather arrogant.

Instead Richard Nixon, abetted by false prophets like Billy Graham, contrived to cover up the recent national experiences of evil, defeat and tragedy. Rather than ask us to face the ambiguity of our own terror, our own brutality; rather than say it was evil but necessary for these and those reasons; rather than call our deeds by their true names, he has drawn over them the thin gauze of "peace with honor" and moral righteousness.

I am perhaps among a minority that believes the horror of the Indochinese war might have been given moral justification, as among those evils mature nations and mature persons sometimes become involved in, in the name of complex other goods.

But evils do not in such cases become goods. They remain evils. This is why mature nations and mature persons invariably have "dirty hands." From implication in evil there is no escape.

Instead, President Nixon continued our involvement in Indochina without giving the nation even the spiritual comfort of honesty about our deeds. Bad enough to have to do them. Worse, to have hidden from one hand what the other hand was doing.

Now the scandals accumulated around the Presidency oblige as all to "wallow" in the ordinary stench of power, money and manipulation. The nation has lost, let us hope, its innocence. We can no longer merely trust Presidents, or other officials, or boys in stock-car races. This nation is as subject to corruption as any other. Our dream may be a tragic dream after all. Our national destiny may be ironic.

Our greatest literary figure, a perennial celebrant of violence, exploits a woman's life in order to earn \$200,000 for 60 days of work, without the ordinary research his allegations warrant. Far away, in a despotic land, Solzhenitsyn calmly stakes an artist's life on clean and naked, hard won, and triumphant truths. Success is not nobility of soul. Great skill is not artistic genius. A captive Russian teaches free men.

If our national self-understanding is expanded, if we glimpse at last this nation's gargantuan capacity for corruption—no greater than any other nation's, equally petty as all the others—Richard Nixon will, ironically, have bequeathed us a most important moral lesson. He will have put in place the firm rock of a new and dark civil faith. His face will have revealed a true face of America: he is us. We shall owe him the experience of our own evil that finally opened up our eyes.

THE OLD CHURCH, THE SPANISH CHURCH, THE AMERICAN CHURCH

ROBERT COLES

'I am an instrument of the Lord's,' one priest says

IN TOWN after town up the hills of far northern New Mexico or in the settlements somewhat hidden among the mountains east of Albuquerque, the Catholic churches stand, almost inevitably the tallest, most noticeable building to be seen. Some are nondescript, even upon occasion surprisingly flimsy: wood covered with shingles or brick put together without any real thought of beauty, even it seems, permanence; signs with the times of Mass announced hung loose or crooked; no effort at landscaping, hence muddy, rutted roads in winter, or dry, dusty ones in summer—and a lonely, stark quality which a few trees might have diminished. Other churches are quite different; they are of adobe or a mixture of adobe and cement, and are sturdy, well fitted into the town's setting, which is often evocative of the center of Spanish cities: the narrow streets, the plaza, the protective walls, and again, the center of it all, His building, with the invariable announcement in Spanish (and sometimes, but not always, in English) that He will be worshipped at such-and-such times, and with the bell which doesn't hesitate to call on His behalf, and is immediately heeded. These are the churches that are likely to have nicely cared-for grass—not to be taken for granted in semi-arid country. They are also often possessed of a small garden—a few cactus plants, some rocks arranged in a pleasing way. And there are usually trees, often quite massive, the best of the region's cottonwoods, for instance—and one is likely to look at them, admire them, wonder whether they hadn't been put there for just that purpose, to guard the church.

ROBERT COLES, psychiatrist and member of the Harvard Medical School, won a 1973 Pulitzer Prize for *Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers and The South Goes North*, volumes II and III of *Children of Crisis* (Atlantic-Little, Brown).

On Sundays in the mountain communities everyone goes to church, and there is no traffic jam as a result. The roads, so empty at times that they seem a pure indulgence on the state's part, suddenly are full of men, women and children walking in the middle, never mind to the sides: what better use for asphalt than to help keep special clothes looking good before and after Mass? As for anyone who happens to be driving toward the church, let him dare use his horn or try to nudge people with his noisy, racing motor or his tires coming rudely close. For that matter, a distant plane can receive a look not meant to kill, merely register the pain, confusion and sorrow one world feels for another: how can it be that on a Sunday like this, which God has chosen to grace with His sun and with a cloudless sky, they are up there in that machine, rather than somewhere on this earth, praying?

Of course, such a question often goes unasked, merely kept in the back of the mind—a thought of sorts about the twentieth century, with its increasingly hard-to-fathom but inescapable contrasts. Time was when Santa Fe or Albuquerque were there all right, but of no particular consequence or immediacy in the lives of various villagers for whom thirty or fifty miles might well have been three or five hundred miles. Time was when all else outside a given town's land was a limitless and not especially inviting beyond. Now there are planes, and increasingly noisy and aggressive automobile drivers, who won't anymore, it seems, rest content with the usual tourist spots, but have to poke and pry their way into every corner of every county—even up dirt roads, so they can get what they call a "view." What to do but pray for them on Sundays? One may not really feel so inclined, but that is the point of prayer, to ask the hard

Commonweal: 495

things of God, not simply to beg in a self-centered manner for any little possession the mind may have come up with as desirable. As the good priest says; as the father told us; as we heard in church—the phrases vary, but they all are meant to indicate how carefully a person has listened to, and made his own, ideas handed down by another: him who helps us, leads us, urges us on to Him.

"I am an instrument of the Lord's," one priest says, but not boastfully. Not coyly either; he is being matter-of-fact. "I try to do what I hope is likely to serve God's will best," he elaborates. Not that he *knows*; one can only try, and one can only hope, and one can only make a judgment about a likelihood. Then he quite consciously skirts egotism: "I have no right to set myself apart from other priests. We all fail every day, certainly those who presume to speak on behalf of our Lord. But a long time ago I think I did learn one lesson: be firm with people, stand fast for what is right, but take care not to confuse yourself with God. It is a sin even to suggest that a priest does that, but we are all tempted, and no one more than a priest, I am afraid. Some priests more than others, though; it is well to be blunt. Maybe I am the worst of us all—sitting here and making my comments about 'them' and about myself. Beware of the preacher, especially one as old and ingrained in his habits as I am."

A NERVOUS smile is followed by a serious, reflective look, then a broader, more relaxed smile. Hands hold on to a chair; one of them quickly moves toward the right thigh: some dust on the pants, caught by a sunbeam. Soon the hands are folded around the belly, and it possesses a certain prominence: a perfect resting place for the forearms as well as the fingers. A few remarks about one parishioner, then another, and as always, blessings on both of them: "May God offer them His grace; they are among the oldest who come here on Sundays, and I always seek them out after I talk to the people: make my announcements, deliver my sermon, offer my congratulations and give my warnings—a dangerous moment for a priest, I am convinced. For a long time I never gave a second thought to what my words meant to people; I was too busy preparing the speech and in my mind giving it. By the time I *did* give it, I had already decided whether it was one of the better ones, or one of the less useful ones. But I have been given enough time to look back and take stock—a mixed blessing, I assure you. Some of my former sermons, like ghosts, have come to haunt me. I preached charity with a complete lack of it; and mind you, I am no stranger here, but a man who ought to understand his own people."

With that, silence; a hard silence to interrupt with a clever bit of nonsense or a face-saving compliment which would only make matters worse by suggesting that self-

criticism requires reassurance or is a subtle, self-assertive maneuver aimed at obtaining praise. The head bows, but not for any embarrassing length of time. A glance at the crucifix on the opposite wall, then a direct stare at the visitor, followed by an inquiry: shall some tea be brought in? Yes; so he is up and out of the room for a second. Soon an elderly lady brings in a tray. On it, besides the tea, are an assortment of cookies and some cake, too. He looks at them, casts a quick look at his belly, then smiles at himself indulgently and reaches for the tray—to serve, but also to eat heartily. Just as the lady is leaving he refers to her—and she leaves hearing, not for the first time, one is sure, his comment: "I am a spoiled child, an old, old, one, but that is all the worse. And she is the one who does it!"

When the door is firmly closed he continues, hoping perhaps she can hear, anyway: "The two of us should stay away from such sweet things. I do not weigh myself because it is rather prideful to do so; but I know deep within my heart that I am playing a wicked game: my pride urges me to avoid facing the scale, and I call upon 'the sin of pride' as an excuse. It may be a devious move on my part, but I doubt the good Lord fails to see through my purpose. And all the time my lady-friend, so anxious to care for me, urges me on to greater excesses: not only cookies, but her tasty cake! She knows only too well how weak I am; and I can't blame her, tempted though I am to do so. She offers, but I need not accept. Anyway, I have joined her in a conspiracy: I make sure she finishes what I don't. As you can see, neither of us is lean and hungry. I fear there will be a lot of fat to burn in Hell all too soon—for we are both about to go there in the near future. I would think."

Another pause, this time followed by a sigh not in the least stifled; then he shifts to a more philosophical vein: "There's no point worrying about the future. That is one of the virtues of our Spanish heritage: we are not lazy; we work hard; but we trust in God, not our own dreams of glory. Anglos believe in themselves. I should not say it, but I will: even Anglos who are Catholic do not think as we do. I would go further and add *Anglo priests* to the list. Irish priests come here and the people submit to them—yes, they do—but they do not really follow them spiritually. It is difficult for me to talk like this; I find it hard to explain what I mean in English—or in Spanish either. Some might say I am getting old—over seventy, and so given to sentiment, exaggeration, melodrama. I will stand up for my beliefs, though. For almost a half century I have been a priest here in New Mexico, always with my own Spanish-speaking people, always in the small towns, where the culture and traditions and customs are most pure and least influenced by the Anglo-Americans. (They call us all those names; well I have always liked to call *them* Anglo-Americans, and I think of myself as a Spanish-American.) Now in all these years I have learned more than I have taught. I have

come to know the people; after all, I hear their confessions and they come to me every day for advice. But I must never forget how much they have helped me to understand my own life—what my parents brought me up to believe, why I think the way I do about so many issues.

"I suppose I would be considered by some Anglo priests strict, by others far too lenient. I have no use for many of the changes now taking place in the American Church. I am grateful for being up here, far removed from those changes. I am grateful for being old; I will soon go—well before the Catholic Church I love so much becomes before our very eyes conquered by the American evangelists: practical-minded businessmen; university agnostics; experts in technology; and I have to say it, the psychiatrists and Unitarians and—what do they call it—'ethical culture' people, with their talk of 'community.' You see, the hippies have come near here, with their communes. I have talked with them. They give me things to read, while all the time denouncing books. So I keep up with the world! The children of hippies, I fear, are lost: they know too much, have seen too much. They have no knowledge how to control themselves, only give way to their own demands. How sad, to see seven- or eight-year-old children so sure of themselves, so cynical, so demanding and bossy with strangers. But I do not want to sound shrill and narrow about hippies. The truth is, I feel sorry for them. I pray for them. I know they don't want my pity and my prayers. I know the danger of smugness. Still, I must pray.

"I read magazines; I have tried to keep my mind open—without success, no doubt many would say. I love the Latin Mass. So do our people here. They do not want English or Spanish; they want their Latin Mass—it truly is *theirs*. And they go to church to pray to God, not to man, not to the society. I did not become a priest in order to celebrate man; nor do my parishioners come here to stare in the mirror and exult at their 'capacities.'

"I respect each generation's right to see things a new way. But the Catholic Church is devoted to one Man, who turned out to be God Himself. If we fail to center our attention on Him and His teachings; or if we go against His teachings for the sake of keeping up with 'modern times,' then it is best we close all our churches and say there is no longer a Catholic Church, just a collection of buildings to which egoists and materialists take themselves on Sundays out of some nostalgia, or because they get bored, or because they have a 'religious need,' and are trying to give it 'expression.'

"Oh, I have to tell you that I have no patience with all that. A few years ago, before I became hopelessly old-fashioned—and even bitter, I would have to admit—I would go to retreats, or to conferences; I would listen to lectures about the 'new' Church, and I would try hard to go along. But I know a Protestant when I see one—even up here they have made their inroads! And I know

a truly agnostic or atheistic person. I don't want to win such a person over. I respect them—that may well be one way I differ (in the more 'free-thinking' direction) from some other priests. I simply want to stand up for my own beliefs, and I do not want to fool myself or fool the families who come here by giving the name Catholic to a porridge of secular notions, any of which may be valuable and important, but none of which are meant to be worshipped in Christ's name, in the name of our Lord and Savior."

HE STOPS, and seems to be going into a moment of intense self-absorption. He looks up at a picture of the Bleeding Heart of Jesus; it was given to him by one of the better-off families. The man and his wife had gone to Mexico, to South America, and while there had remembered him. They made sure he hung the picture where he would be able to look and look—and be somehow affected. He had once before told the story: how they were so proud to have the gift for him, how they chose a place for it, having been given *carte blanche* with his walls, how the señora personally hung the picture, having had it framed in Santa Fe. Now as he stared the Bleeding Heart seemed a refuge for him: let others make their "adjustments" to the twentieth century: let others be embarrassed by the ancient imagery and ritual of Catholicism; let others feel more comfortable with toned-down iconography or up-dated theology or scripture interpreted defensively in the face of convictions asserted by theoretical physicists, paleontologists, observers of African chimpanzees, Marxist historians, ever so knowing and self-conscious psychoanalysts, the last with their nervy interest in a dozen other "fields," including his own. He would not wince at the representation of the Bleeding Heart, nor run in shame from it, nor give it a "re-interpretation," nor fit it into someone's "archetypal pattern." He would simply look and meditate and gain strength. "The Lord's agony has meant peace and wisdom for millions over the years," he had said months earlier, after a similar moment spent with that picture; now a moment was becoming a minute, which can be a long time indeed when two people are alone and talking.

Then abruptly, words began to come—and forcefully: "I will surprise you. I acknowledge superstition within the Church. There was a time when I wanted to study philosophy and theology—not be a parish priest. And I did, by myself. There was a time, even decades ago, before the recent changes in the Church, when I had little use for those flaming fires, those blood-drenched Hearts. My father was well-to-do—a prosperous landowner, and a self-educated man. He never left the Church, but he did business with the Anglos—too much business. He made too much money, and their Protestant ideas went to his head. My mother prayed for him. Only in his last year did he really become part of

the Church again. He taught me to distrust the excesses: the festivals and cards and pictures and what he called 'the smell of ignorance and fear' that hovered over the church and the parish house all week.

"My mother said: why not? She said: is it better to crave the newest automobile, or a machine that washes clothes? She loved her scrub-board. She had no use for servants. She loved her rosary beads. She hated gasoline fumes and she would stop by the side of the road and pick up trash left there. That was a long time before we ever heard of the word 'ecology.' She worried that the people of this town would soon be hanging pictures of cars on their walls, rather than the Bleeding Heart of Jesus. She worried that the President would come before Christ, the skyline of Albuquerque before the Church's mission. She was educated by nuns, and no doubt they were hard on her. But she knew how hard used-car salesmen can be on their customers, and politicians can be on the voters, and the commercials on radio can be on a poor worker, trying to keep his self-



respect and trying to live a decent, honorable life. Thank God she never lived to see television. I watch it and ask who is superstitious, who is ignorant, who is backward: an old lady coming to me holding on to her rosary or doing a novena or handing cards with Christ's face or His heart to her children and grandchildren, or those people who write the commercials and speak them and act in them, or worse, listen to them, then jump to pay attention?

"But I am ready to go back on my own ideas; to a degree I am. I know that I am old, and I have never done much, only take care of the souls God has entrusted to me. This world is full of injustice, and I haven't done much to change things. I preach. I ask members of my flock to be kinder to one another. I ask them to look with care at *me*: am I mistaken in my ideas? They become uncomfortable when I talk like that. After the sermon they say: Father, you cannot mean what you say! Father, you must know you cannot be wrong! I reply: so, you think I am dishonest when I ask you to question me! That makes them stop and think! There is so far I have gone, though. I haven't marched to the cities with

words of protest. I haven't tried to become a Chicano, a fighter in the world of politics and social activism. Christ fought the money-lenders. I know that. Christ was turned upon by the 'powers and principalities.'

"I do not deny the Church's responsibility: to be on the side of the poor, the hungry, the downtrodden. Here, of course, most people are barely able to get by, day after day. There are few rich people, and not many like my parents were—the middle class, they could be said to come from. No matter: our people are stubborn about their lives; what they have inherited they will keep, and what others want for them, they will look at with great suspicion. Am I the one to shout at them, call them fools, backward fools? Am I the one to demand that they stop being so grateful for so little, and instead, rise up, start marching, tear aside the curtains of self-doubt and hopelessness, begin forcing themselves and their reasonable and just demands upon today's pharisees and money-lenders, upon today's Pontius Pilates and the emperors who employ them?

"Any curate worth his salt tries to arouse his people; but he is also bound to feel their presence and respond to their view of life—as opposed to his own wishes for them. I will tell you: in the 1930s, when it was much more desperate a time than now, I stormed about, I was ready to lead an army down from this hill. Don't ask me where we would have gone. It never came to that. And it wasn't rich people or a sheriff who turned anyone back. There was no one to turn back. Maybe some today would say I should have raised my voice even louder, or if that failed to arouse people, march by myself. Maybe some would say I should have left here—told them all how ignorant and unimaginative they are, how little vision and little ambition they possess. I might have found willing supporters in Santa Fe, among the comfortable artists and writers, and those who hang onto them, look up to them as *their* priests. In more recent times I might have gone to Albuquerque, a noisier, less settled city, not so self-assured and full of itself, not so interesting to Easterners—and a place where a justifiably angry priest, anxious to link arms with his people's forward-looking organizers and spokesmen, might be quite welcome. I am glad, very glad, there are priests who have done so—become leaders of the very broadest kind. If I get sullen and mean-spirited, if I try to protect myself, justify myself, by saying uncharitable, snide things against such priests, I can only pray that I learn better in another life. But today a man like me has little voice; his bad remarks, his rudeness toward others, matters little (except before God), because there is no one to hear. Everyone listens to the men of outrage and alarm. Few pay much attention to the millions of Catholics all over the world who are not unlike my own parishioners—or to priests like me, who are so quickly dismissed as out-of-date.

"I may sound as if I am asking for pity or attention

—or both! At my age, though, a man loses a bit of the vanity we are all heir to. It is dangerous, I know, for one like me to make such a judgment, but I will take the risk. I am simply asking that ‘the people’ be heard—a cry worthy of a reformer, even an agitator! I do not mean that we limit our vision to their vision. Those of us in a position to lead should try to lead; it is sad to see leaders justifying their own prejudices and inertia by pointing out the presence of both in ‘the people.’ But it is also sad to see leaders lose touch with their followers, or those supposed to be their followers. And some leaders are self-appointed, and speak for audiences or groups other than the ones they claim to be from, or working for.

“I have nothing more to say. I have been held back by the climate here—so cold in winter, so hot in summer—I occasionally say to myself in justification for my lethargy. At other times I feel that I have done my best. And then there are those moments when I have to confess to myself: I have been a coward, even as so many of my superiors in the Church have betrayed Christ. But I love being here, and have been privileged to earn a certain place here, a certain measure of affection and respect from people I have grown to care for and love, for all their failures and blindness. I am old, and I suppose it is the old Church I represent. I am Spanish, and so I have a streak of the mystical in me, and a streak of indifference—I should admit it—to all that is new and yeasty. I tend to fold my hands and say that this too will pass, and afterwards there will be the same problems: those with power and those with much less; those who live better than others; those who die young and the old, grouchy ones like myself who hold on to life for longer than seems fair, considering all the children who are doomed by fate. So it was Christ’s time; any time this side of Armageddon.

“But I am American, so if I am of the Spanish Church, I am also of the American Church: I may dislike a lot of changes I see these days (the television set my parishioners bought me!) but I am also glad that there is a lot of ferment in this country; and there are even times when I wish I could lose all this weight, and shed my wrinkles and gain back the energy I had, in order to go picket somewhere. Maybe more important to gain back than the energy would be anger: good, clean anger at the rich and powerful, the self-contented and the hypocritical. Americans are always looking for solutions, answers; they are—we are—so restless, and so taken up with ourselves. It is a bad trait—the danger of pride; it is a good trait—the courage to change, the strength to oppose what is wicked but entrenched. Don’t ask me to give percentages of how much bad, how much good. When one is old one tends to rest with the oars; when one is young, one has one’s eye on new goals. Perhaps the Spanish Church is old, the American young. As for me, I am half-and-half. What I know without question

is that I have given up searching for consistency. My mother influenced me a lot, but one thing she taught me I no longer believe: consistency is *not* a virtue. Oh, I should say this: it is not a virtue I will ever possess.”

HIS EYES now look to his visitor, then through the window to some cattle moving down the road, followed by a young man on horseback. The cattle are wandering all over, and the man is trying to hold them together. Behind him are cars: one, two, three—a line of them. The man seems not to notice them, let alone show any signs of hurrying his herd. Finally, one driver loses his patience: the horn—which gives the other drivers courage to do likewise. Now the man angrily stops his horse: he will leave the cattle to their own devices; he will stay there all day if necessary; he will make his point. The priest is amused. It is not the first time he has witnessed such a confrontation, nor is it likely to be the last. Yet, each time he wonders what to think. Who is in the right? The man on horse is stubborn, maybe spiteful. Still, he was there first, and the cattle have to be moved to another pasture, and they, too, belong to the town. The drivers probably don’t; they are coming through to look, enjoy, feel a tinge of awe or envy—but soon enough to leave, glad to be on their way to some city, some other part of the country, where they can talk about “the beauty of New Mexico,” but live their more urbane, sophisticated, progressive lives.

A shrug of the priest’s shoulders, another sigh; the protagonists have moved up the road and out of sight. He must prepare for tomorrow. He has confessions to hear. He has homes to visit. He is heavy and gets short of breath, but he is a walker: the families within two or so miles are reached on foot. As for the rest, he asks for help from young people who have cars. He enjoys driving with them; they are so full of joy and enthusiasm; the noise of the motor, the speed, the quick stop that defies the worst expectations of older people. Sometimes he wishes he had learned to drive. Sometimes he has pictured himself at the wheel, going along at a fast rate, waving at his many friends. Younger priests do so many things he has not done, and it is good they do them, he knows.

Nevertheless, when he comes back from a drive he is not only refreshed but pleased to walk, or simply sit and doze, or read—or else do something else: “Occasionally I sneak into the church, when I know no one is there. I sit at the very back; and to be honest, my mind doesn’t do much. I’m not praying. I’m not thinking very hard. I just say a word or two to our Savior: it is up to You to make sense of all this; all we can do is try to be as upright as possible until we are summoned—and told how well we have done, or how badly. Then I am ready to go outside and pick up again: the next obligation.”

THE UNDESIRABLE VETERAN

RAYMOND P. BOULANGER

Since 1961, over 200,000 individuals have received an undesirable discharge

Bad discharges from the military are one of the many bitter legacies of the Vietnam war. As it is, Vietnam-era veterans with honorable discharges must contend with high unemployment rates, inadequate VA benefits, and public indifference to their sacrifices and needs. The veteran with a bad administrative discharge, either a general or the even worse undesirable discharge, suffers in addition from the potentially disabling stigma associated with such a discharge.

It is ironic that public attention has focused on amnesty for a handful of draft evaders (most of whom could adjust easily to civilian life because of their middle-class backgrounds) while ignoring the one-half million former soldiers, often black, uneducated or poor, who because of a bad administrative discharge may find civilian life filled with bitter frustrations and hardships.

(Aside from the administrative discharges described above, the military does award punitive discharges, either the bad conduct discharge or the even more opprobrious dishonorable discharge, as a result of court-martial proceedings, the military's equivalent of a criminal trial. The award of a punitive discharge is largely incidental to the finding of the soldier's guilt and in most cases his sentencing to confinement. This article does not address itself to punitive discharges.)

Since 1961, over 200,000 individuals have received an undesirable discharge from the military services—either in lieu of court-martial or as a result of administrative proceedings for “unfitness,” which encompasses such things as drug abuse and an established pattern of shirking duty. A disproportionate number of these discharges, as I've indicated, was issued to blacks, the uneducated or the poor. For example, in 1971, blacks received undesirable discharges at twice the rate of whites. In the last decade, 300,000 more individuals received a general discharge. General discharges are granted usually for “unsuitability,” a term of art covering such things as character and behavior disorders.

In addition to a discharge certificate, all veterans receive a Report of Discharge (DD Form 214), which carries a coded number (SPN) indicating the reason for the individual's discharge. Some of these—for example,

SPN 384, which indicates drug abuse as the basis for discharge—can have disastrous consequences to the future opportunities of the veteran.

A study of Major Bradley K. Jones recently published in the *Military Law Review* confirmed that bad administrative discharges adversely affect employment opportunities. He concluded on the basis of the results of a survey of employers, educators and professional licensing authorities that “[a] less than honorable discharge obviously hampered an ex-serviceman's employment or acceptance prospects.” In fact, 20 percent of all surveyed employers automatically disqualify any job applicant with an undesirable discharge. Many others treat the characterization of service as the most important factor in determining whether the individual is employable, especially when he is being evaluated for a position where moral character may be important (e.g., law enforcement) or where a security clearance is needed.

This is unfortunate. The often extraordinary demands of the military, especially in a combat situation, are not the same as those experienced on an assembly line or in an office, and the individual's inability to cope with military service, especially when he is only 18 or 19, is not a valid predictor of his future job performance even in a sensitive position. There is also something quite unfair about this entire characterization system. Those who escape military service—generally the more affluent members of society—are not subjected to the possible consequences of a bad administrative discharge. And if they do flunk out of Yale or are fired by Ford, they are not branded for life as “undesirables.”

If rebuffed in obtaining a job, the veteran with an undesirable discharge may seek to better himself by applying for GI educational or training benefits. Again, he is likely to be rebuffed. Although the VA adjudicates questionable cases to determine whether the service satisfies the requirements of the VA, the usual result is to deny VA benefits to those with undesirable (but not general) discharges. This is a substantial economic loss for many individuals.

Most of the criticism of the military's discharge system has been directed toward the due process protections afforded the individual subject to administrative separation. For example, Senator Sam Ervin (D.-N.C.) has introduced bills in the Congress which would impose additional procedural safeguards on the administrative separation of servicemen under other than honor-

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21 September 1973: 500

able conditions. This approach, however well-intentioned, is largely misguided. Except for certain rules of evidence regarding the introduction of hearsay and illegally obtained evidence and certain problems with compelling the attendance of witnesses, the current procedures for awarding undesirable and general discharges afford the individual a substantial measure of due process, including the right to legal counsel and a board hearing. Layering still more due process on the system is not really going to help.

Many individuals waive their right to contest their separation. Although the serviceman is advised by his legal counsel on the consequences of an undesirable or general discharge, it is too much to expect an 18- or 19-year-old to understand or appreciate what this would mean to him in personal terms. Many of the servicemen may have also been misled by "barracks lawyers" into thinking that their bad discharges ("bad paper") could be automatically recharacterized after a short waiting period. In truth, it is extremely difficult to obtain a recharacterized discharge from the two review boards established by Congress for this purpose. Even if the serviceman had some understanding about the consequences of an undesirable or general discharge and knew it could not be changed, he would probably not resist it. For him, it is an easy way to end his problems with the military. Even if he has a good case in his defense, he wants "out" regardless of the nature of the discharge.

In any event, the result in most cases is foreordained. The officers ruling on these matters reflect an understandable bias in favor of protecting the powers of the commander. And even if the criteria for administratively discharging individuals were severely restricted (as some should be because of their overbreadth and vagueness) or more due process were afforded the individual, there would still be sufficient justification to separate many individuals who for one reason or another failed to observe the expected standards of discipline and order.

Finally, many servicemen charged with a court-martial offense—often AWOL or drug charges—request and are granted an administrative discharge, usually an undesirable discharge, in lieu of court-martial. In the process, the soldier avoids a possible period of confinement and gets what he wants most of all: out of the service. He may later regret this decision, especially if he is black, uneducated, or without any valuable skills.

As suggested by the Black Congressional Caucus and half the members of the Department of Defense Task Force on the Administration of Military Justice in the Armed Forces, we ought to end altogether the hoary and sanctified practice of characterizing the service of military members; instead, we should issue only certificates of service, uncoded and uncharacterized. We ought also to recharacterize or at least decharacterize all previous bad discharges.

Aside from the fact that the honorable discharge has been granted to millions of veterans and has secured a vocal constituency, there is little reason to retain the present characterization system. The present system provides little, if any, incentive for good conduct on the part of the serviceman. Many of the "bad performers" are so immature and troubled psychologically that they are totally oblivious to the consequences of the discharge they receive. More importantly, there are other deterrents, such as Article 15 nonjudicial punishment, which are more effective.

The present system also cannot really be justified by the way it dispenses punishments and rewards. The punishment it exacts is often excessive. More importantly, it may foreclose future job and educational opportunities to the detriment of not only the individual but also society in general. Also, it is not really necessary to reward anyone with an honorable discharge, especially since military service has been traditionally viewed as an obligatory part of citizenship.

The new characterless system might even prove beneficial to the military services. They would still be able to eliminate individuals for cause, but they would be relieved of the onerous task of characterizing the individual's service.

Hopefully, Congress and the Executive Department will have the compassion and common sense to declare an amnesty on all bad discharges. After all, it is only a matter of time before some form of amnesty is granted to draft evaders and deserters. Can we be any less charitable to those who encountered difficulties in their service to their country and received bad administrative discharges?

THE SPIDER'S STRATAGEM



THE SCREEN

At the end of Lindsay Anderson's first film, *This Sporting Life* (1963), something awful happens. Rugby player Frank Machin (Richard Harris) rushes to a hospital just in time to see his mistress, a widow in whose home he boards, die of a brain tumor. Then comes the awful part. Distraught with grief not only at her death, but also at his own cruelty towards her when last they were together, he notices a spider that happens to be crawling down the wall above the bed. Trembling from his anguish, he reaches out and crushes the spider with his hand.

So many things seem to me wrong about that hapless spider, it is hard to know where to begin to criticize—or better still, exorcise—such an image. On the simplest and most literal level, unless one is trying to document

lapses of sanitation under the National Health, one doesn't find spiders in hospital rooms. The spider is out of place there. It doesn't belong. It's an intrusion, an imposition, an importation.

Perhaps a more serious breach of art, however, is the fact that this spider isn't even an accurate image for the dilemma in which Anderson's rugby player finds himself. Where is the capricious hand of fate that crushes him? It doesn't exist in the film Anderson made. Up to the point when he does in the spider, Frank has been a hero born out of British realism, which puts its emphasis on man as a psychological being. Frank is the victim of his own character, not of the gods or fate—a smalltime Macbeth or Lear, not Oedipus or Agamemnon. To dramatize his catastrophe with this crushed spider is to play him false.

Unfortunately, Anderson's new work, *O Lucky Man!*, is an attempt to make a whole movie about that spider. It's the biography of an ambitious young everyman named Michael (Malcolm McDowell), who starts out as a sales trainee for a coffee company and ends up a felon in the service of a wily tycoon (Ralph Richardson). Between these two positions he travels Britain from end to end being taken advantage of. At last, seduced, tortured, exploited, exploded, convicted and reformed as he is, Michael is given a handbill inviting him to a casting session for a movie. There he is spotted by Lindsay Anderson who selects him to star in his new film, *O Lucky Man!*

It is easy to see from the casting session at the end of the film why Malcolm McDowell was given the part of Michael. Anderson calls him aside from all the other drifters, junkies and bums who have shown up and asks him to smile. But he refuses. So Anderson rolls up the script and bashes him smartly across the face, just the way Frank smote that spider. To this blow Michael/Malcolm shows no reaction whatsoever, which is perfect, of course. Couldn't be better.

McDowell's natural expression always has a certain pasty insolence in it with the result that, when something humiliating or outrageous happens—something to be insolent about—he need not change his look. Since he already looked as if he were fuming impotently before it happens, no change of emotion, no visible reaction, is necessary. This is the quality that landed him the lead in *A Clockwork Orange*, and in the long run he finds it suits as well the similar role of the spider in *O Lucky Man!* After everything that he's been through by the time he arrives at the audition, Michael may not still be simple enough to follow Anderson's direction as he has everybody else's orders. But he is not yet someone who acts out his resentments either. He just stands there. Intractable, that's him.

In *This Sporting Life* the image of the spider was at least inappropriate. We had seen a pretty good film until we got to the spider, and if his sequence was dis-

concerting, we could just throw it out without having to throw out the rest of the film as well. When Anderson clouts Michael with the script, however, the gesture is all too apt. This is exactly what Anderson has been doing to his hero throughout *O Lucky Man!*—interfering with him, playing the hand of fate in his life. But I doubt that Anderson sees it that way. On the contrary, he seems to think of Michael as someone he has endowed with a quite independent life, a life that almost has some objective existence. The retroactive effect of putting the casting session at the end of the film is to suggest that everything which went before is not Anderson's fantasy at all. It is, rather, a set of real experiences that have led up to Anderson's fantasies and prepared Michael to enact them.

There is something not a little egomaniacal and selfish in this conceit. It makes the whole film seem the sort of mistake a man makes when he has told some fish story for so long that he has begun to believe it himself. By the time Anderson gets to his ending, his film has indeed been a long time in the telling. Though it's been cut by the distributors in this country, *O Lucky Man!* was over three hours in its original release in England. What's more, it was over five years in the making, for that's how long it has been since Anderson's last film, *If . . .* Perhaps if he would work a bit faster than a film every five years, Anderson wouldn't fall into these mix-ups between figment and fact. It might take a great load off his mind were he able to think of his imagination as having less consequence.

After Malcolm has been cast in the role of Michael, there is a sequence showing the cast at what is, I presume, a post-production party. They are all leaping into each other's arms, laughing and dancing. This seems to me a very egoistical turn as well. It assumes not only that there is something to celebrate about how the film has been made, but that making the film will somehow right the topsy-turvy world depicted in it. It is as if the painful and meretricious lives we have been watching could suddenly achieve joy and fulfillment simply by being portrayed in a film. Can Anderson really think that his making a film about the ills of the world will cure them, or at least compensate us who suffer them? *O Lucky Man*, to have such a gift to bestow.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.



JACK LINDEMAN

IRISES

The leaves are here
& the irises
are prolonging their promise.
They know my need for words
& offer their color.

Legal questions aside, the charge of plagiarism leveled against Norman Mailer by the English publisher of Maurice Zolotow's *Marilyn Monroe* and Fred Lawrence Guiles' *Norma Jean* are absurd, less a cry of moral outrage than a crude publicity-seeking device such as others accuse Mailer of. (Mailer's advertisements for himself are always on a grander scale, never merely venal.) Expropriation, yes; felony, no; but outright imperial expropriation, nothing sneaky, and by admitted means for lofty ends which stand indebted to no man. In the literary economy, it is entirely fitting that pedestrian biographers glean the fields for the big harvester.

The questions whirling about Mailer's glossy, rapaciously expensive homage to his heroine are more interesting, and less susceptible of adjudication; and they have to do in the first place with form and procedure. As to form, we may now add to those other mischievous, obfuscating constructions—Capote's "non-fiction novel" and Wolfe's "new journalism"—Mailer's hedging, opportunistic, murky one: "novel biography," which is what you say when you want the all-outdoors freedom and license of imaginative improvisation, and at the same time want no part of the sheer plod entailed by biography. In truth, the book is neither one nor the other; and since one term is no better than another, let's call it a free-form fantasia where anything goes if you can get away with it—astral, gnostic ruminations on the earthly career and heavenly reward of a character named Marilyn, née Norma Jean Baker.

So far, these terms are meant to be descriptive: Mailer is nothing if not imaginative, and improvisation is his great strength; and in art anything does go, providing only that you can get away with it. As all the world knew long before publication, "it" started out to be an introduction to a splashy retrospective of photographs, and swelled to a ninety-thousand-word text as Mailer kept diving and reaching, reaching and diving for the blue flower who had made an earlier appearance in *An American Dream* and had occupied a vital sector of his consciousness, one

MAILER'S MARILYN

SAUL MALOFF



may imagine, for a long time before that. Mailer has said, by way of explaining the leap from original intention to full-blown text, that he fell in love with the material, meaning, of course, the fecund possibilities that the material afforded for literary fantasy; but meaning also, surely, that he was in love with her—a seemly surrender for a novel-biographer, and a perfectly natural one for any growing boy. She was luminous, oddly gifted, forlorn, gallant, tender and cruel and doomed: a tragic American queen. And she kept telling us, those of us who were truly beautifully sensitive enough to under-

tle to fly by, mostly what he calls a "chronology" of her life, a few raggedy notions, and a tattered grab-bag of ideas which are inflated but not made otherwise more substantial by Mailer's voodoo metaphors. A great biography is of course possible without personal experience of the subject (one need look no further than Ellmann's Joyce); but where some element of the subject can reveal itself by a movement, a look, an inflection of voice, an idle observation or casual remark, a single sustained conversation—as surely must have been the case with Marilyn—experience might have helped. (Marilyn observed was Marilyn in part understood: Joyce was made of word and shadow; she of flesh and spirit, light and air.) Mailer never met her, to his regret and ours; he had neither the time nor the inclination even to interview many people who knew her at all well. And so he set out on his voyage with the stuff of which celestial melodrama is made: the "illegitimate" child loving-hating the abandoning father and dreaming of her "real" father—the Gable who would at the end of his life and near the end of hers be her screen lover; the mad mother; the orphanage; a lifelong deathtrip; the husbands and lovers and one-night stands; the mysterious fevers and notorious tantrums; the putative affair with Bobby Kennedy; the pills; the end.

These elements act now and then to secure Mailer to an actual life, allowing him the rest of the time to spin free, answerable to little more than what one sentence—one fugitive, airy wisp of a conceit—suggests the next one might be. Now, we know Mailer

Marilyn: A Biography

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stand what she herself could not convey, that if she were to survive and flourish it could only be through the saving grace of our miraculous ministrations. We happy few intuitively understood that, not by anything she ever said or did but by the ineffable truths beamed from the pulsing glow of her skin, those perpetually moist lips and the lusterless magic of her heavy-lidded eyes. Mailer understood, even as you and I—though no one else—understood; and if he couldn't reach her in time, he knew she awaited him yet. On the evidence of the book, she'll have to go on, a chaste bride, waiting for her redeemer.

For out there in space, Mailer missed the connection. To say why before how, he missed because he had pitifully lit-

Commonweal: 503

has done just this again and again to brilliant effect; yet here, where the coming together of writer and "material" seems a foreordained marriage, he never makes it to bed. The task, since there never was any serious question of a biography (Publisher to Author: "Norman, I've got a terrific idea. This jive about "novel biography" doesn't cut much ice. I don't know what else to call it, so let's call it a "biography.") —the task, short of creating a fiction to put her in, had to be to conjure out of the known and rumored life a character named Marilyn Monroe various enough to fill a book, the utterly convincing counterpart of the woman who filled her skin and the screen, all at once filled with her own quotidian life and an inner life that had been deeply imagined for her.

Instead Mailer draws blank after blank: blank on the childhood, blank on the early years, blank on the adolescence. Blank on the adolescence! All the while the devious self was forming, we get—instead of its densities and atmospherics—a "study like this, bound to stray toward the borders of magic"; we get lyric flights on the "double root" of life, and on karma and ghosts and the "divine soup" and divination and cabbala and whatever else storms the brain as it gropes through the ozone for the elusive mystery. In short, we get mystification upon mystification, layer upon layer obscuring still more deeply the mysteries of personality, motive, act, choice, will.

Unaccountably Mailer can do nothing more than provide Marilyn with a compounded "identity crisis": she is both "Napoleon" — Napoleon! — and "mouse," "angel" and slut, and such-like antinomies. (Mailer, with his hawk's eye for coincidence, pounces on the fact that her last address was Helena Drive as if he had discovered the infant Norma Jean floating in a basket on the Nile or wrapped in bunting in a burning bush, the one atop Olympus.) To give short shrift to the

first marriage is one thing; but Mailer is hardly more interesting on the Di Maggio marriage, though he tries hard—and in truth it may have been hardly more interesting, unless he decided to modify to specifications the roles of Blanche Du Bois and Stanley Kowalski. Beyond some mild lubricities, he projects only Di Maggio's sulks and her boredom. Something more might have been made of the first marriage: an ordinary 19-year-old boy, small-town American who would grow up to be a cop; and a 16-year-old pert, bouncy, and oddly withdrawn, dreamy, perversely moody cheerleader who would grow up to be Marilyn Monroe and was already bursting with the confused awareness that she was intended for other worlds. There's a novel there, but it's not Mailer's kind of novel.

If he's blank on the first and disappointing on the second marriage, it may be that he was husbanding his energy for the third, the Arthur Miller marriage. For here he really lets go, as if at last he's found a rival worth the effort, wreaking violence not only upon Miller but upon that principle of equity which in its aesthetic form binds the writer to show cause for his judgment. Since he doesn't scruple to savage Miller mercilessly, it can't be by reason of prudence or delicacy that he withholds the evidence. Small meanness, petty malice touch bottom: Mailer charges Miller with stinginess, miserliness—just as a general character-reference, not even bothering to relate those qualities (if indeed they are true) to the marriage; engages in a bit of nasty political baiting while, out of the other side of his mouth, aspersing his talent. He portrays Miller as a washed-up writer who saw in the marriage dazzling commercial possibilities (as well as a happier alternative to dreary writing); and accuses him, evidently still nursing the wound many years and great fame later, of not asking him to dinner when they lived in neighboring Connecticut towns!

Yet, despite such neglect, Mailer can still find it in his heart to forgive the playwright: Miller, it is suggested, didn't dare invite him, sensing what

Mailer freely confesses, that "his secret ambition, after all, had been to steal Marilyn; in all his vanity he thought no one was so well suited to bring out the best in her as himself. . . ." Miller may have had the gall to get there first, but Mailer knows he was no good at it when he got there. How does he know? you may ask. Don't ask. When you are of a "cabbalistic turn of mind," as Mailer admits to being, you know these things. There's a spot in the exact center of the forehead and slightly below the surface, invisible to all other eyes, which, when penetrated by cabbalistic vision, beams data on the quality, intensity and frequency of orgasm. (It's called an orgascope, or cabbalometer.) If the word were not hilariously inappropriate, as well as indecorous, one would have to say that, in his dealings with Miller, Mailer is unremittently bitchy. (Curious that the wild possibility that Miller may have been in love with her should not have occurred to Mailer, to whom all things occur.)

About the Kennedy affair (Guiles says yes: Mailer says no; I say the question is of prurient interest merely and of no redeeming social value), the less said the better; and to provide a forum even if only hedgingly to half-dismiss it, to the crackpot rightwing delusion that she was murdered in a plot to undermine the Kennedys is to—well, we'll leave that the late evening talk-shows, where Mailer has been dining out lately.

But fair's fair, and Mailer's Mailer; and Mailer at his worst is still an indecently interesting writer with an unfailing gift for generating excitement as well as rage. Amidst the paste there are real gems—on acting, on camera and cinema, on the Actors Studio, on certain states of consciousness. His lover's tribute to Marilyn strikes some home truths, and is moving. Because it is dead right and apt, it would be cal low to call the language cloying: she was "blonde and beautiful and had a sweet little rinky-dink of a voice and all the cleanliness of all the clean American backyards. She was our angel, the sweet of sex, and the sugar of sex

SAUL MALOFF's new novel, *Heartland*, will be published on September 28 by Scribner's.

came up from her like a resonance of sound in the clearest grain of a violin. . . . She would ask no price. . . . Marilyn suggested sex might be difficult and dangerous with others, but ice cream with her. If your taste combined with her taste, how nice, how sweet would be that tender dream of flesh to share. . . . Sex was, yes, ice cream to her. 'Take me,' said her smile, 'I'm easy. I'm happy. I'm an angel of sex, you bet.'" Love engraved that profile in popular iconology. He cannot bear her loss, any more than we can; and for that we can almost forgive him some of his excesses.

Her own best biographer, she has the best line in the book. Just as, at the very moment she had convinced you she was the dumbest dumb blonde ever to have inhabited that populous corner of popular imagery, the creamiest creampuff that ever burst its golden shell, she could break your heart with a sudden surprising show of artistic ingenuity and charm; so could she also reverse all your expectations with an utterance. This one couldn't have been premeditated; it must have happened just like that, as so much of her life, and all of her death, happened: accidentally. Some interviewer asked her, near the end of her life, an unremarkable question, and spontaneously she said: "I'm always running into people's unconscious."



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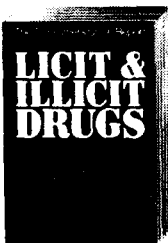
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angles—know that the reticent E. M. Forster wrote a considerable amount of overtly homosexual fiction that remained unpublished during his lifetime. As Lytton Strachey recorded after a successful house party in the 1920s, "Morgan was charming at the week-end. He read two stories to Carrington and me—improper—quite amusing." These stories were amusing precisely because they were improper, and in the days when both homosexuality and pornography were illegal, these underground writings could only circulate privately among homosexual writers like Strachey, Siegfried Sassoon and T. E. Lawrence. In *A Room With A View* and *The Longest Journey*, the public complement to these stories, the homosexual themes were disguised as male friendship, after the fashion of the Greeks, and were expressed slyly and covertly; as in Forster's description of the Maharajah in *The Hill of Devi*: "He penetrated into rare regions and he was always hoping that others would follow him there." (See also G. L. Dickinson, the subject of Forster's biography, writing about his fellow Kingsman, Oscar Browning, in the highly respectable *Dictionary of National Biography*: "he assisted young Italians, as he had done young Englishmen, towards the openings they desired.")

In the eight homosexual stories of this volume (there are also six weak "straight" stories) Forster has left a sexual time bomb that fails to explode ("he gave the zip at the throat a downward pull. Much slid into view"). In "The Obelisk," for example, an unattractive couple are temporarily revived when the wife is serviced by one sailor and the husband buggered by another, after the symbolic obelisk has "fallen right over into the landslip upside-down, and the tip of it's gone in ever so far." The brief excerpts

from Forster's diary and letters, quoted in the Introduction, are actually more interesting than the fictional leavings. Forster notes in his diary for 1911, the year he published *Howards End*, "a cause of my sterility is weariness of the only subject that I both can and may treat—the love of men for women & vice versa"; and when he completed *A Passage to India* in 1923 he tells Siegfried Sassoon, "I shall never write another novel after it—my patience with ordinary people has given out." Unlike Proust, who transformed his "secretary" Alberto into the fictional Albertine, Forster never wrote of homosexual love in a heterosexual disguise.

As Forster himself recognized, these stories of inversion are a kind of literary masturbation: "These were written not to express myself but to excite myself." They are all somewhat precious, freighted with coincidence, and filled with fantasy and sudden violence. The dominant theme is the "call to life," where the intuitive and impulsive momentarily triumphs over the rational and repressive mode of experience, and a quickening into love is achieved through a homosexual encounter. Forster writes in his diary of 1935, "I want to love a strong young man of the lower classes and be loved by him and even hurt by him," and in his fictional fantasies his stiff heroes achieve salvation with milkmen, soldiers and Indians who, like the animals in one tale, "clucked and copulated as usual." Forster's repressed hero is always condescending and patronizing, and his *liaison*, no matter how successful, never has a future:

The affair had been trivial and crude, and yet they both had behaved perfectly. They would never meet again, and they did not exchange names. After a hearty handshake, the young man swung away

down the path, the sunlight and shadow rushing over his back.

Forster's need to be "hurt" by his lovers, to punish his guilt, is reflected in all the serious stories. In "Arthur Snatchfold," the milkman is arrested in the sacred wood as soon as he walks off; and the two most ambitious stories, "The Life to Come" and "The Other Boat," which concern the relations between an Englishman and his sensual Indian lover, both end in disaster. In the former the naked Indian stabs the Englishman to death and jumps off the roof, and in the latter the Englishman stabs the naked Indian and jumps off the ship.

Two of the stories have a curious origin. In "The Classical Annex" the Curator sees the fig leaves fall off the sculpture and observes "an obscene change in the statue's physique." After his premature retirement the museum acquires "The Wrestling Match" and the Town Councillor remarks: "'Very nice piece, very decent. Look 'ow the elder brother's got the little chappie down. Look 'ow well the little chappie's taking it.' " This was probably inspired by the obscene statue of Hercules and Diomedes (Diomedes, held upside down, grasps Hercules' parts) in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, for Forster sent Joe Ackerley a postcard (now in Austin) of this sculpture with a suitable comment.

"The Torque" illustrates Lytton Strachey's witty retort when asked what he would do if a man tried to rape his sister: "I would attempt to interpose myself between them." For when Marcian and his holy sister Perpetua are attacked by savage Goths, "Marcian intervened to save her. . . . 'I will hold them off from you. Escape.' She escaped and he got raped." It is characteristic of Forster that at the crucial moment of this fetishistic story (the torque "had been round his lover's neck once. He swayed against it and found himself in his lover's arms") he lapses into Latin tags ("destillat ab inguine virus"), like the Life of Tiberius in an expurgated version.

Perhaps the most interesting story is

"Dr. Woolacott," a kind of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in which Connie is omitted, the gamekeeper ministers to the Master, and homosexuality is treated as an illness that can be "cured" by an indulgent inoculation. In a moment of critical aberration T. E. Lawrence praised the story in a military-sexual metaphor: "The most powerful thing I ever read . . . more charged with the real high explosive than anything I've ever met." But the

editor does not explain the reason for Lawrence's enthusiasm: that he was the model for the "war-obsessed" stranger who liberates the invalid from death-in-life to an exultant *Liebestöd*. Forster dedicated *The Eternal Moment* "To T. E. in the absence of anything else," and (as I guessed three years ago in *South Atlantic Quarterly*) "The Point of It" is the story that Forster told Lawrence is "a feeble timid premonition of the one

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["Dr. Woolacott"] which is with you now and which is yours really, and that is what the dedication really means."

In 1964 Forster wrote in his diary, "I should have been a more famous writer if I had written or rather published more, but sex has prevented the latter." In fact, neither his homosexual novel *Maurice* nor these stories, none of which is as good as "Oedipus at Colonus" or "The Eternal Moment,"

adds to Forster's stature as an author; and the editor sounds more like a blurb writer than a critic when he states that the two most ambitious tales, "show Forster at the height of his powers, with a tragic grandeur unequalled in his stories, and unsurpassed even in *A Passage to India*." These homosexual stories were better therapy than art, and they seem rather trivial when compared to *The Immoralist* and *Death in Venice*, where the homosexual theme is transfigured into a literary masterpiece.

Agent for Change: The Story of Harvey (Pablo) Steele

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JOSEPH A. PAGE

Advocates of the cooperative movement proclaim it to be the road to human development and material progress in Latin America. Critics label it a "band-aid" approach, incapable of dealing with fundamental causes of poverty and degradation.

Harvey Steele, a Canadian priest long active in the struggle to encourage the formation of credit unions and housing, farming and consumer co-operatives, provides some useful, even-handed insights into the debate. His autobiography, *Agent for Change* (as told to Gary MacEoin), reflects a vision that is optimistic without being utopian: cooperatives are uniquely suited to grass-roots, self-help organizing in Latin America, but no real progress will occur absent a fundamental reallocation of political and economic power. At the same time he describes, in a delightfully blunt style, the shaping of his own Christian commitment to revolution, and his concept of the priest and missionary as cutting edge.

At an early age the harsh realities of life in a Nova Scotian mining town taught him the meaning of economic exploitation. His notion of what its victims must do to escape went to the jugular. "They have to cultivate personal habits of hard work and thrift, and then they have to join together,

pooling their efforts and their tiny savings until they constitute a counterforce able to humble the proud and infuse terror into the heart of the exploiter. During that long wait, no sign of the vengeance in their heart must show on their inscrutable face, even when with hat in hand they surrender their sons to be killed and their daughters to be violated."

This tough-minded outlook remained with him as he joined the Society of the Scarboro Fathers, to become a priest with the order's mission in China. In 1937, it was difficult to arrange travel to China, then at war with Japan. While waiting for transportation, he came into contact with the cooperative movement, which had sprung up in eastern Canada in response to the Depression, and found its philosophy consonant with his abiding thirst for social justice.

The subsequent missionary years in China gave him no opportunity to spread the gospel of cooperativism, but convinced him of the futility of trying to save men's souls while ignoring the subhuman conditions in which they lived. After World War II, he was able to devote himself to cooperative work, first in the Dominican Republic, and then with a training center in Panama for leaders in the Latin American cooperative movement.

Harvey Steele's faith in cooperativism stems from the conviction that impetus for radical change in Latin America must come from below, from the people themselves. The formation of cooperatives serves to educate them in their own capabilities to improve conditions, and to motivate them to participate in the struggle to help themselves.

As he readily admits, the cooperative movement has yet to make a dent in Latin America's social and economic problems. The challenge is to translate local self-help efforts into the sort of sustained force that can wrest power from the exploiters, both domestic and foreign. Steele recognizes that this will provoke repression that will inevitably breed counter-violence.

He also acknowledges the interest of

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HAVING ATTENDED the 600th anniversary celebration last July of Sancta Birgitta at Vadstena, Sweden, as a guest of the Birgitta Sisters, and informed by Bishop John Taylor of Stockholm of the problems of the church in that Catholic mission country—namely, to keep the Catholic immigrants Catholic and supply them with priests of their own tongue—I am seeking new members for the St. Birgitta Guild in this country. Write to Bror Jon., A.A., Convent of St. Birgitta, Vikingsborg, Darien, Conn., 06820.

the U.S. in preserving the status quo in Latin America, and expresses particular concern over the activities of the CIA. In this regard, he unfortunately seems unaware that in the years just before the 1964 military coup in Brazil, the CIA infiltrated the rural cooperative movement in Northeast Brazil, using a covert agent to channel agency funds to the cooperatives. The CIA viewed them as conservative forces meriting support against the revolutionary leftist groups that were trying to organize peasants politically. The theory was that peasant leaders who were involved in the nitty-gritty of cooperative work would have no time for the political activity that was threatening the establishment in the Northeast.

Perhaps what happened in Northeast Brazil would not be repeated because of the opening to the left that has characterized progressive Latin American Catholics in recent years. Indeed, Steele himself identifies with Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife, Brazil, and others who call for a new Christian Marxism that can bring economic and social justice to the masses. As he points out in his conclusion, "For two thousand years the Catholic Church has placed the emphasis on charity, with little practical concern for justice. The Marxists stress justice, but they show little interest in love. But the fact is that neither of these virtues can flourish without the other without producing gross distortions. They need each other."

The Obscene Bird of Night

JOSE DONOSO

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RONALD DE FEO

In his excellent novella, "Hell Has No Limits" (recently published here in the collection *Triple Cross*), the Chilean writer, José Donoso, dealt with themes of identity—the dissatisfaction with self and existence, and the adoption of roles to alleviate that dissatisfaction. In his new book, a huge, striking and at times very puzzling novel,

Donoso explores a strange, decaying world, given to ritual and madness, and populated by discontent, isolated souls often longing for a change of skin.

The mute Humberto Peñaloza, chief narrator (his "voice" sometimes alternates with that of an omniscient author), was once secretary to the de Azcoitías, a wealthy, aristocratic family of Chilean landowners. Now old and broken and haunted by the past, Humberto spends his remaining days in a crumbling, labyrinthine convent home for old women where he is abused and made to share in the old women's fantasies. He sees himself, has seen himself for quite awhile as a nonentity, a servant of servants who has lost his identity. What identity he originally possessed is difficult to say. He was a "university man" at one time as well as a writer, but his recollections concerning these roles are extremely vague. It would seem that he has always been an incomplete individual, a gray little man desiring some sense of importance, of being. When he worked directly for Don Jerónimo and Inés de Azcoitia, he dreamed of becoming the powerful, respected Don and having the lovely Inés for his very own. At one point, when Don Jerónimo, the politician, is trying to cope with an unruly mob, Humberto is mistaken for him by an assassin and is shot in the arm. This is the closest Humberto ever comes to achieving his employer's status, and he imagines himself entering Inés' bedroom as the brave, wounded hero.

Throughout the novel we encounter characters who either slip into and out of various roles at will or are completely trapped in a single one. Iris, a young, sensuous and rather coarse orphan pretends for a time to be Inés, as does the witch-nursemaid Peta Ponce, who uses her occult powers to bring Boy (the deformed son of Inés and Jerónimo) into the world. An old woman plays at being the pregnant Iris' baby. Humberto himself is reluctantly cast in the baby role. For some the role-playing isn't frivolous, temporary, but rather a serious way of life. Don Jerónimo is determined to maintain his role as the strong leader, and

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he constantly needs an audience to do so—the Don, according to Humberto, required servants so they might witness his life, give it meaning and reality. Inés has immersed herself in her role to such a degree that she (somewhat like Humberto) has lost touch with her original self: “How are you going to recognize me when I don’t recognize myself? It’s as if someone were saying

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the things I’m saying and feeling.” Since Inés is so trapped in her part—the loving, desirable wife of Don Jerónimo—she begins to believe that escape can come only through an operation: a hysterotomy which will transform her into an old, undesirable woman. Similarly, Boy, the hermetic grotesque, who is cared for by grotesque servants and has thus come to regard ugliness as a norm, wishes to have part of his brain cut out, the section which remembers his disorienting and humiliating five-day visit to the outside world.

As Donoso describes this absurd world of ritual and deception, he also traces the deterioration of various characters and settings—the decline and eventual demise of the de Azcoitia family, the fall of the convent home, and Humberto’s passage from vague being to non-being. Throughout the novel, the author is in complete control of his material, handling complex monologues and time transitions with ease and, except for a few lapses, subtly dramatizing his ideas. I would be dishonest to pretend that a book as long, dense and claustrophobic as this is not a challenge and a chore for the reader. At times it does seem tedious, too repetitious. And after reading parts of it a second time, I still couldn’t decide whether certain scenes were “real” or simply products of Humberto’s imagination. But for all its difficulty, *The Obscene Bird of Night* is a stunning and original book by an unusually gifted and serious writer. Though the world Donoso has created seems quite closed and distant, the odd, desperate inhabitants, with their games and crises of identity, are simply representative of the confused and tortured players who perform on the vast stage we know so well.

was profoundly changed by Medellín. That there are bishops trying to recall it as a defective model diminishes but has not yet negated the influence of that “most fateful assembly of Christians since Pentecost.”

2. MacEoin places what hope he has for Latin America in the rising up of the “hitherto suppressed masses.” I too, but I think that a large part of the post-Medellín church is also verbally committed to the same vision and a not insignificant cluster of “Abrahamic Minorities” (Helder Camara’s phrase) is actively working to bring it into reality. The very existence of dragons, commonly seen by both progressives and moderate conservatives as eminently worth slaying (e.g., the new imperialism of the multinational corporations and the absurdities of U.S. policy on Cuba, Culebra and the Canal Zone) has drawn more of the church into the common struggle than MacEoin seems to allow for.

3. While progressive groups like Golconda in Colombia and ISAL in Bolivia have dissolved or been suppressed, others have acquired new vitality in just the last year. The Mexican Priests for the People is growing, the Argentine Movement of Priests for the Third World, actively Peronist, is now stronger than ever, and Chile’s Christians for Socialism is increasingly playing a role of hemispheric leadership for individuals and small groups everywhere striving to bring about Christian liberation in their area.

4. Finally, the Brazilian bishops. Late news enabled a footnote to be inserted about the Conference of Bishops’ Campaign for Human Dignity and the extraordinary 32-page pastoral letter signed by the 17 bishops and major superiors from the Northeast. There has subsequently been a similar pastoral from Goiás, another from São Paulo and one from Porto Alegre. Their content is so rich and so potentially explosive that any summary here is futile, except to say that they all come down hard on the myth of the “economic miracle” and the long-standing suppression of human rights. It is a total misreading of the strength of the mili-

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 491)

Four more signs of hope briefly:

1. Whether the Latin church was more deeply affected by Vatican II than any other segment of Catholicism, it

tary dictatorship to suggest that the bishops simply saw that the jig was up for the regime. Gen. Medici has just named Gen. Geisel to be his successor and the smart money is on Geisel (whose brother, also four-starred, is the war minister) to survive till 1978.

The bishops of Brazil, something more than the allotted 15 percent of them, have done what Medellin called on them to do, to preach the Good News of liberation from oppression, domination and dependency.

THOMAS E. QUIGLEY

Scolding the Scholar

Debary, Fla.

To the Editors: Talcott Parsons' article [May 18], inveighing against faculty who opposed Bellah's appointment to the Princeton Institute, is the opinion of a scholar rather than a scholarly opinion. If they were amateurs for presuming to assess Bellah without qualifications comparable to his, Parsons was no less amateurish for locating the basic difficulty in weak administrative arrangements, "extending faculty power too far." His simplistic analysis gives aid and comfort to university components—namely, administrators and trustees—whose power to dominate the academic scene has always been extended too far.

By what facts, logic, and theoretical underpinning of higher education can the judgment of specialists even unrelated to the specialty of a prospective faculty member be subordinated, in principle, to the judgment of people increasingly removed from, if ever connected with, the academic specialties that constitute higher education? The specialists have at least methodological ideals in common, and their historic split into qualitative and quantitative approaches is an internal development in the form of a division of labor rather than, as newcomers like to think, a takeover from discredited spinners of tales. The concern of members of either tradition to resist the taint of seeming association with the other is not objectionable even when self-serving unless progress in the other tradition is pre-

cluded without full disclosure of the reasons therefor.

Unfortunately, candid disclosure is not the mark of an administrator or trustee. The characteristic that makes these worthies laughable in their role as final decision-makers when experts disagree is their habit of bypassing full disclosure in favor of ukases, silence, or doubletalk, as if their distinctive mission was to shield sacred mysteries from the vulgar gaze of mere workers in the fields of truth. The files of the AAUP *Bulletin* since 1915 effectively deflate this pretension.

A device closer to scholarly interests and eliminating much administrative made-work would be the method by which the early church resolved important questions: namely, by casting lots, or rolling the dice. It is scientific, even silly, but its silliness falls far short of the motives that impel university trustees to invest large chunks of funds in sports, and university presidents to grant honorary doctorate degrees to comedians and other financially and politically useful personages. Maybe Watergate can rescue us for a while, at least, from the delusion that the end justifies the means, when the means, upon disclosure, demean higher education.

GERARD HINRICHS

'Bishop' Not a Bishop

Morristown, N.J.

To the Editors: Re "A Roman Abbot Outside the Walls" [July 27], a tiny correction: Abbot Giovanni Franzoni is not a bishop. He is an abbot nullius, but that is not the same thing as being a bishop.

(REV.) MARTIN J. BURNE, O.S.B.



REVIEWERS

JEFFERY MEYERS' most recent book is *Fiction and the Colonial Experience* (Rowman and Littlefield).

JOSEPH A. PAGE is a professor at Georgetown Law Center and author of *The Revolution That Never Was* (Grossman).

RONALD DE FEO contributes to *The National Review*, *The Nation* and other journals.

Commonweal: 511

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Dear Occasional Reader:

THIS SEPTEMBER 21 ISSUE seems to us typical of *Commonweal's* timeliness and topicality. Michael Novak's column relates the present plight of the Nixon Presidency to America's overblown moralistic stance toward the rest of the world. Dr. Robert Coles presents a sensitive picture of an engaging, old Spanish-American pastor and the style of life that still exists in sparsely settled areas of our Southwest. Raymond P. Boulanger points to the handicaps facing the thousands of Vietnam veterans (many of them black and poor) who have not received an "honorable discharge."

Also in this same issue Professor Amitai Etzioni of Columbia University discusses the significance of an August 15 Miami court decision giving the mother the sole right to decide whether or not to have an abortion. And Saul Maloff evaluates Norman Mailer's heavily illustrated "novel biography" of Marilyn Monroe.

Informative as this week's sample is, you will only be able to discover the full force and unique flavor of this lay-directed journal of opinion by reading successive issues of *Commonweal* for several months. To make this possible for you at a minimum of inconvenience, we are offering a trial subscription of 17 issues for only \$3—over 400 pages of meaningful political, cultural and religious comment at a saving of 55% of the magazine's single-copy price.

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